



THE CORRECT ISLAMIC
AQIDAH
& THAT WHICH OPPOSES IT

by the noble scholar
Shaykh 'Abdul-'Aziz Ibn Bāz



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[THE ANGEL] JIBRĪL ASKED THE PROPHET
ABOUT ĪMĀN. HE REPLIED TO HIM,

“Īmān is to believe in Allāh, His Angels,
His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day
and to believe in Predestination - the good
and bad of it.”

[BUKHĀRĪ AND MUSLIM]

The Correct Islāmic ‘Aqīdah and that which Opposes it

With an Appendix about Allāh’s Names and Attributes

by ‘Abdul-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn Bāz

Translated by Abū ‘Abdis-Salām



DAAR US-SUNNAH PUBLISHERS

Second Edition Published in Great Britain September in 2008 /
Ramadān 1428H by Daar us-Sunnah Publishers



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British Library Cataloguing in publication Data.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Title: The Correct Islāmic al-‘Aqīdah and that which Opposes it

Author: ‘Abdul-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abdillāh ibn Bāz.

Translated from the original Arabic by Abū ‘Abdis-Salām

ISBN 1-904336-25-6

Paper-back

First Edition 1424AH/2003CE

Second Edition 1428AH/2008CE

Typeset by: Daar us-Sunnah Publishers

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TRANSLATOR'S
Introduction

All praise belongs to Allāh alone, we praise Him, seek His aid and seek His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allāh from the evils of our souls, and the evils of our actions.

Whoever Allāh guides then there is none who can misguide him and whoever Allāh leaves to stray then there is none who can guide him. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh alone, having no partners. And I bear witness that Muhammad is the slave and Messenger of Allāh

To Proceed:

This is a translation of what was originally a lecture given by our beloved *Shaykh* 'Abdul-'Azīz Ibn Bāz *rāḥimahullāh*. The lecture was then transcribed in the form of a book in Arabic and was entitled *al-'Aqīdah as-Sābiḥah wa mā yudādūhā* (The Correct Islāmic *al-'Aqīdah* and that which Opposes it).

After reading the book, I immediately decided to translate it as I saw a great need for this type of book to be available in the English language. It is true that books concerning the Islāmic *al-'Aqīdah* are available, however I have found that many put across false concepts, especially in the area of the Names and Attributes of Allāh.

The *Shaykh*, *raḥimahullāh*, explains the basics of belief that every Muslim must know adorning it with proofs from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Indeed, the Messenger of Allāh, *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām*, said, “*The seeking of knowledge is compulsory upon every Muslim.*”

I have tried to stick to a literal translation departing from this style where the meaning would be more clearly explained in another way.

I have also placed a number of quotes from the *Salaf* regarding their understanding of the Names and Attributes of Allāh, in the appendix. Other brothers had already translated these. The reason for including these quotes was due to the fact that in this age, the *Ummah* suffers from many deviated ideas and thoughts with regards to this subject. We find that many people have an incorrect understanding, and are propagating this understanding, such that a large proportion of Muslims are left confused as to what exactly is the correct position of the *Salaf* concerning Allāh's Names and Attributes. Hence, I thought that such quotes would leave no room for doubt about the correct understanding, as *Shaykh* Ibn Bāz has explained in the relevant section.

Finally, I thank all those involved in the production of this work, and I ask Allāh to accept it from me, making it a means for my sins being forgiven. I ask that He aids me in making this work sincerely for His Sake, and also make it a source of goodness for the *Shaykh* 'Abdul-'Azīz Ibn Bāz *raḥimahullāh*.

Abū 'Abdis-Salām
13 Rajab 1420 AH
23 October 1999 CE

BIOGRAPHY

About the Author ¹

HIS NAME: 'Abdul-'Azīz Ibn 'Abdillāh Ibn 'Abdir-Rahmān Ibn Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdillāh al Bāz.

HIS BIRTH: He was born in the year 1330H in the city of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He had normal sight in the beginning of his studies and was then afflicted with an illness in 1346H, which impaired his eyesight. He later became blind in 1350H when he was only 20 years old.

SEEKING KNOWLEDGE: He started upon the path of knowledge at a very young age and memorized the *Qur'aan* before puberty. The *Shaykh* excelled in his knowledge of the various branches of *Shari'ah* and the Arabic language and was then appointed judge. This however, did not stop him from seeking knowledge until he died. The various offices he had held did not prevent him from teaching and engaging in research.

HIS TEACHERS:

1. *Shaykh* Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdil-Latīf Ibn 'Abdir-Rahmān Ibn

¹ Adapted from 'Words of Advice Regarding *Da'wah*' Published by Al-Hidaayah Publishing and Distribution.

Hasan Ibn *Shaykh* Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdil-Wahhāb, *rabimahullāh*.

2. *Shaykh* Sa‘ad Ibn Ḥamad Ibn ‘Atīq (The Chief Judge of Riyadh).
3. Ḥamad Ibn Fāris (Vice Chancellor of the Treasury at Riyadh).
4. *Shaykh* Sālih Ibn ‘Abdil-‘Azīz Ibn ‘Abdir-Rahmān Ibn Hasan Ibn *Shaykh* Muhammad Ibn ‘Abdil-Wahhāb (The Chief Judge of Riyadh).
5. Sa‘ad Waqqās al-Bukhārī, one of the scholars of Makkah who he learnt the science of *Tajwīd* from in the year 1355H.
6. *Shaykh* Muhammad Ibn Ibrāhīm Ibn ‘Abdil-Latīf Āl Ash-Shaykh. The (former) official expounder of law in Saudi Arabia. *Shaykh* Ibn Bāz attended and adhered to his study circles for approximately ten years. He learnt all the branches of the *Shari‘ah* from him from the year 1347H up until 1357H whereupon his teacher then nominated him for a post in the judiciary.

HIS VARIOUS POSTS AND POSITIONS HELD:

1. Judge in al-Kharaj district for a lengthy time, spanning approximately 14 years from 1357H until 1371H.
2. Teaching post in Riyadh at *al-Ma‘had Al-‘Ilmi* in 1372H then to the college of *Shari‘ah* from its inception in 1373H. He taught the sciences of *Fiqh*, *Tawhīd* and *Hadīth*. This continued for nine years up until 1380H.
3. He was appointed as vice-chancellor of the Islāmic University of Madīnah in the year 1381H and he remained the post until 1390H.
4. He became Chancellor of the University in 1390H upon the death of the then Chancellor *Shaykh* Muhammad Ibn Ibrāhīm Āl As-Shaykh, *rabimahullāh*. He remained Chancellor until 1395H.

5. In 1413H, he was appointed as the official expounder of Law in Saudi Arabia in addition to presidency of the committee of senior scholars and presidency of the administration for scientific research and legal rulings.

He had also been a member of many other Islāmic Committees, such as:

1. President of the Permanent Committee for Scientific Research and Legal Rulings.
2. President and Member of the Constituent assembly of the Muslim World League.
3. President of the Higher World League council.
4. President of the Islāmic *Fiqh* Assembly based at Makkah, which is a subsidiary council to the Muslim World League.
5. Member of the Higher Council of the Islāmic University of Madīnah.
6. Member of the Higher Committee for Islāmic *Da‘wah* in Saudi Arabia.

HIS INFLUENCE: The *Shaykh* had influenced and effected many people and in many different ways. An important way was via the study circles and lectures he delivered until he died. These date back from the days he used to reside in the Al-Kharaj district, then in the various educational establishments he taught in whether in Riyadh or at the University or the Prophet’s Mosque in Madīnah.

HIS DEATH: On Thursday 27 *Mubarram* 1420 (May 13, 1999), *Shaykh* ‘Abdul-‘Azīz Ibn Bāz died - the end of a blessed life lasting eighty-nine years, one month and fifteen days.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

All praise is for Allāh alone, and prayers and peace be upon the Prophet, his family and his Companions.

To Proceed:

The correct *Aqīdah*¹ is the foundation of *Islām* and the foundation stone of the Islāmic nation. It is known through evidences of the *Shari'ah*² from the Book³ and the *Sunnah*⁴, that one's actions and statements can only be correct and acceptable to Allāh when they arise from a correct *Aqīdah*. If, however, the *Aqīdah* is not correct then the actions and statements that arise due to it are invalid. Allāh the Exalted says,

¹[Translator's note]: *'Aqīdah*: Loosely translated as creed, a more precise definition would be 'a firm and unwavering belief that is not open to any doubt with its beholder.' [Shaykh Nāsir al-'Aql in *Mujmal Usūl Abī-is-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah fil-Aqīdah*, p.5].

²[Translator's note]: *Shari'ah*: the divine code of law.

³[Translator's note]: The *Qur'an*.

⁴[Translator's note]: The *Sunnah*: The commands, prohibitions, sayings, actions, and silent approvals of the Messenger of Allāh *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām*.

وَمَن يَكْفُرُ

بِالْآيَاتِ فَقَدْ حَبَطَ عَمَلَهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَسِيرِينَ ﴿٥﴾

Whosoever rejects faith, then fruitless is his work
and in the Hereafter he will be among the
losers.⁵

وَلَقَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ

لِئِنْ أَشْرَكْتَ لِيَحْبَطَنَ عَمَلُكَ وَلَا تَكُونَنَ مِنَ الْخَسِيرِينَ ﴿٦﴾

And indeed it has been revealed to you [O Muhammad] as it was to those before you [saying]: 'If you join others in worship with Allāh [then] surely [all] your deeds will be in vain and you will certainly be amongst the losers.'⁶

There are many verses with this meaning.

The evidences in the clear Book of Allāh and in the *Sunnah* of His truthful Messenger *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām* show the correct *Aqidah* in brief, to be: *Īmān*⁷ in Allāh, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and Predestination - the good and the bad of it. These six matters are the fundamentals of the correct *Aqidah* with which Allāh the Almighty revealed His Book and sent His Messenger Muhammad *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām*.

⁵ *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* (5):5

⁶ *Sūrah al-Zumar* (39):65

⁷ [Translator's note]: *Īmān* can be loosely translated to mean faith, but includes more specifically the belief of the heart, the sayings of the tongue and the actions of the limbs.

All issues concerning the unseen and all that we have been informed of from Allāh and His Messenger *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām* stem from the above principles and we are obliged to believe in them. The evidence for these six pillars [of Faith] are in the *Qur’ān* and the *Sunnah* and are many. These include the sayings of Allāh,

﴿لَيْسَ الِّبَرَّ أَنْ تُولُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قَبْلَ الْمَسْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبَرَّ مَنْ أَمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّنَ﴾

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East or the West [in prayers] but righteous is he who believes in Allāh, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book and the Prophets.⁸

﴿إِيمَانُ الرَّسُولِ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلُّهُمْ أَمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكِتَابِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ﴾

The Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from His Lord, as do the faithful believers. Each one believes in Allāh, His Angels, His Books and His Messengers. [They say:] We make no distinction between one and another of His Messengers.⁹

⁸ *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2):177

⁹ *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2):285

يَكْتِبُهُمْ

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذْ مُنَذِّرُهُمْ وَأَلَّا يَكُنُّ الَّذِينَ نَزَّلَ
عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلٍ وَمَنْ يَكُفُّرُ
بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَأَنِيَّوْمَ الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ فَضَلَّ

صَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿٢٣﴾

O you who believe! Believe in Allāh, His Messenger [Muhammad], the Book [the Qur'ān] which He has sent down to His Messenger, and the Scripture which He sent down to those before [him]. Whosoever disbelieves in Allāh, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Last Day has strayed far away.¹⁰

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ
فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

Do you not know that Allāh knows all that is in heaven and the earth? Verily it is [all] in a record. Verily, that is easy for Allāh.¹¹

There are also many authentic *ahādīth*¹² proving these fundamentals. Amongst them is the famous authentic *hadīth* narrated by Muslim in his *Sahīh* on the authority of the leader of the be-

¹⁰ *Surah an-Nisā'* (4):136

¹¹ *Surah al-Hajj* (22):70

¹² [Translator's note]: *Aḥādīth*: plural of *hadīth*. A narration attributed to the Prophet via a chain of narration (*isnād*), concerning that which he commanded, prohibited, said, did and silently approved.

lievers, ‘Umar ibn al-Khattāb *radī Allāhu ‘anhu*, that [the Angel] Jibrīl *‘alayhi-s-salām* asked the Prophet *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām* about *Īmān*. He replied to him, “*Īmān is to believe in Allāh, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day and to believe in Pre-destination - the good and bad of it.*”¹³

All the obligatory matters of belief relating to Allāh, the Day of Judgement and other matters of the Unseen originate from these six principles.

¹³The *hadīth* is taken from the two *Shaykhs* [Bukhārī and Muslim] from the *hadīth* of Abū Hurayrah and the *hadīth* of Ibn ‘Umar in *Sahīb* Muslim.

CHAPTER TWO

Īmān in Allāh

Belief in Allāh, the One free from defect, includes believing that He is the [only] true deity deserving worship, as opposed to anything else that is worshipped. This is because He is the sole Creator of the slaves, the Granter of kindness and goodness to them, the One who takes charge of their provision and He is fully aware of both their secrets and that which they openly manifest. He is the One who rewards those who obey Him and punishes those who disobey Him. It is for this worship that Allāh created the humans and the *jinn*¹⁴ and He commanded them with it. He the Exalted says,

وَمَا

خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ مَا أَرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ
وَمَا أَرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّازِقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ

And I did not create the Jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me [Alone]. I seek no sustenance from them, nor do I ask that they

¹⁴ [Translator's note]: *Jinn*: A creation aside from mankind, who are created from smokeless fire and have a free will as do mankind. They will be judged for their actions and comprise of Muslims and non-Muslims.

should feed Me. Verily Allāh is the Provider, Lord of Power, the Strong.¹⁵

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَعْبُدُ وَارِبُّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ
 وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُم
 الْأَرْضَ فِرَشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَاءً وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ
 بِهِ مِنَ التَّمَرُّدِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ فَلَا يَنْجَعُلُو إِلَهٌ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ
 تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢﴾

O mankind! Worship your Lord Who created you and those who were before you so that you may become pious. [The One] Who has made the earth a resting place for you and the sky as a canopy, sent down rain from the sky and brought forth fruits therewith as a provision for you. Then do not set up rivals unto Allāh while you know [that there is nothing similar to Him].¹⁶

Indeed, Allāh sent the Messengers and He revealed the Books in order to explain this reality [of worshipping Allāh alone], to call to it and to warn against that which opposes it. He, the One free from defect says,

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنِّي أَعْبُدُ وَأَلِهَّ
 وَاجْتَنَبُوا الظَّفُورَ

And verily, We have sent among every *Ummah* (community, nation) a Messenger [proclaiming]:

¹⁵ *Sūrah al-Dhāriyāt* (51):56-58

¹⁶ *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2):21-22

Worship Allāh [Alone] and avoid *Tāghīt*.^{17,18}

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِيَ إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ
إِلَّا أَنَا فَأَعْبُدُونَ

And We did not send any messenger before you [O Muḥammad] except that We inspired him [saying]: *Lā ilāha illā Ana* (None has the right to be worshipped but I [Allāh]). So worship Me [Alone and none else].¹⁹

الرَّكْنُ أَحَقُّكُمْ أَنْ يَعْلَمُونَ فَمِنْ فِصْلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ حَبِيرٍ
الْأَنْعَمُو إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِنِّي لِكُلِّ مُنْهَى نَذِيرٌ وَّبَشِيرٌ

[This is] a Book whose verses are perfected [in every sphere of knowledge, etc] and then explained in detail by One [Allāh] Who is All-Wise and Well Acquainted [with all things]. [It says] worship none but Allāh. Verily, I [Muhammad] am unto you one who warns and brings glad tidings from Him.²⁰

¹⁷ [Translator’s Note]: *Imām* Ibn ul-Qayyim said that the meaning of *Tāghīt* is ‘everything whose limits the servant transgresses with regards to worshipping, obeying or following.’ An example of worshipping would be in worshipping idols, an example of obeying would be obeying scholars in matters exceeding the limits, and an example of following would be following a leader in matters exceeding the limits. *Imām* Ibn ‘Abdul Wahhāb defined it as ‘everything that is worshipped besides Allāh.’ - *al-Qawl al-Mufid ‘alā Kitāb-it-Tawhid* [1/59-60] by Ibn ‘Uthaymīn.

¹⁸ *Sūrah an-Nabl* (16):36

¹⁹ *Sūrah al-Anbiyā`* (21):25

²⁰ *Sūrah al-Hood* (11):1-2

The reality and essence of this worship is to single out Allāh, the One free from defect, in all of the actions of worship that are performed by the servant [of Allāh]. These acts include supplication, reverential fear, hope, prayers, fasting, sacrifice, making vows, and other than these from all the different types of worship, by way of submission, humility, fervent desire, awe and dread, along with complete love for Him and humility before His Greatness.

Most of the Noble *Qur’ān* was sent down for this great principle. Allāh the Most High says,

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحُقْقِ فَاعْبُدْنَا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ
الَّذِينَ هُنَّ لَا لِلَّهِ الَّذِينَ أَخْرَجُوا

So worship Allāh by doing religious deeds sincerely for His Sake alone, not showing off and not setting up rivals with Him in worship. Surely the religion [i.e. worship and obedience] is for Allāh only.²¹

وَقَضَى رَبُّكَ أَلَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ

And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him.²²

فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الَّذِينَ وَلَوْكَرُهُ الْكُفَّارُونَ

So worship Allāh, making the religion purely for Him, even though the unbelievers hate it.²³

²¹ *Sūrah al-Zumar* (39):2-3

²² *Sūrah al-Isrā`* (17):23

²³ *Sūrah al-Ghāfir* (40): 14

In the two *Sahīhs*²⁴ on the authority of Mu‘ādh, *radīyAllāhu ‘anhu*, who said that the Prophet *sallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām* said, “*Allāh’s right over the people is that they worship Him alone and do not associate any partners with Him.*”

Belief in Allāh also includes the belief in all that He has made obligatory upon His slaves such as the five pillars of *Islām*. The five pillars are: Testifying that none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh and that Muhammad *sallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām* is the Messenger of Allāh; establishing the prayer (*Salāh*); giving the charity (*Zakāh*); fasting in *Ramadān*; performing the *Hajj* to the House of Allāh for those who are able; and the other obligations that come in the pure *Shari‘ah*.

The most important and greatest pillar is the testification that none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh and that Muhammad *sallAllāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām* is the Messenger of Allāh.

Testifying to *Lā ilāha ill Allāh* necessitates sincere and sole worship of Allāh Alone, negating the worship of anything else. Therefore, the meaning [of *Lā ilāha ill Allāh*] is that there is nothing that deserves to be worshipped except Allāh. Hence whatever is worshipped besides Allāh, whether it is a man, an angel, a *jinn*, or anything else is false and invalid. Indeed, the One Who truly and rightfully deserves to be worshipped is Allāh alone. He says,

ذَلِكَ يَأْتِي أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا يَكْدُعُونَ مِنْ
دُونِهِ هُوَ الْبَاطِلُ

²⁴ *Sahīh al-Bukhārī* and *Sahīh Muslim*.

That is because Allāh - He is the Truth [the only True God of all that exists, Who has no partners or rivals with Him], and what they [the polytheists] invoke besides Him is falsehood.²⁵

It has been mentioned previously that Allāh the Exalted created the *jinn* and humans for this great purpose [of worshipping Allāh alone] and ordered them to stand by it. It for this reason that He sent His Messengers and revealed His Books. So consider this carefully and reflect upon it often so that it may become clear to you; and that you may realise [the fallacy] that many Muslims have fallen into due to their great ignorance with regards to this principle - to the point that they worship others besides Allāh! They have given others the rights particular to Allāh - and Allāh is the Source of Help!

Belief in Allāh also includes the belief that He is the sole Creator of the universe, the One who Regulates and Governs the affairs of His creation in accordance with His Knowledge and Power, as and how He Wills. He is the Master of the World and the Hereafter and the Lord of the entire universe. There is no creator other than Him, and there is no lord except Him. None shares with Him in any of these qualities.

[This belief further includes knowing that] He sent the Messengers and revealed the Books in order to correct and purify the slaves, to call them to that which would correct them and bestow upon them victory in this life and in the Hereafter. He the Most High says,

²⁵ *Sūrah al-Hajj* (22):62

اللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكَفِيلٌ ﴿٦﴾

Allāh is the Creator of all things and He is the *Wakil* (Trustee, Disposer of affairs, Guardian, etc) of all things.²⁶

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سَتَةِ
أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يَغْشِي الَّيَّالَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ، حَيْثِ شَاءَ
وَالشَّمْسَ وَالقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ مُسْخَرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ الْحَلْقُ
وَالْأَمْرُ بَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧﴾

Indeed, your Lord is Allāh Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then He *Istawa* (rose above) the Throne. He covers the night with the day, seeking it rapidly, and [He created] the sun, the moon, the stars subjected to His command. Surely, His is the creation and commandment. Blessed be Allāh, the Lord of the 'Ālamīn (mankind, *jinn* and all that exists)!²⁷

Belief in Allāh also includes believing in His beautiful Names and lofty Attributes. They are mentioned in His Great Book and have been affirmed by His trustworthy Messenger *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām*. [We believe in these Names and Attributes] without *tahrij* (distorting the wording or the meaning), *ta'til* (divesting or denying the attributes),²⁸ *takyif* (asking how) or *tamthil* (re-

²⁶ *Sūrah az-Zumar* (39):62

²⁷ *Sūrah al-A'rāf* (7):54

²⁸ [Translator's note]: Whether this is by denying the wording or the meaning.

sembling Allāh to His creation). Rather it is obligatory to leave them as they came without enquiring into the nature of [His Attributes] or how they are, while believing in the meaning that they carry. These are descriptions of Allāh the Mighty and Majestic, and it is obligatory to describe Him with them in a way that befits Him without resembling Him to His creation in any of His Attributes.

Allāh the Most High says,

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ، شَيْءٌ مُّوْهَوْ أَسْمَاعُ الْبَصِيرِ
وَلَا يُنْظَرُ لَهُ الْأَمْثَالُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتَ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

There is nothing like Him and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.²⁹

فَلَا تَضْرِبُوا لِلَّهِ الْأَمْثَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتَ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

And do not put forward any similitude for Allāh. Indeed, Allāh Knows and you do not know!³⁰

This is the ‘Aqīdah of *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah*³¹ from the companions of the Messenger of Allāh *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām* and those who follow them in goodness. This is what has also been quoted by *Imām Abū'l-Hasān al-Ash'arī* (d. 324H), *rahimahullāh*, in his book: ‘*Al-Maqālāt ‘an As-hābil-Hadīth wa Ahl-is-Sunnah*’. Many others from the People of Knowledge and *eemaan* have also stated this.

²⁹ *Sūrah ash-Shūrah* (42):11

³⁰ *Sūrah an-Nahl* (16):74

³¹ [Translator’s note]: *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah* -The people who follow the way of the Prophet *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām* and unite upon it.

Imām al-Awzā‘ī³² (d. 157H), *rahibullāh*, said, “Az-Zuhri (d. 124H) and Mak-hūl were asked about the *āyāt* regarding the Attributes of Allāh and they replied, ‘Leave them as they are.’”³³

Al-Walīd Ibn Muslim, *rahibullāh*, said, “Mālik³⁴ (d. 179H), al-Awzā‘ī, Layth Ibn Sa‘ad (d. 175H) and Sufyān ath-Thawrī (d. 167H), *rahibullāh*, were asked about the reports concerning the Attributes [of Allāh] and they all replied, ‘Leave them as they are without asking how.’”³⁵

Al-Awzā‘ī, *rahibullāh*, said, “We would say while the *Tābi‘ūn*³⁶ were many, ‘Indeed Allāh, the Most Perfect, is above His Throne and we have *īmān* in what is related in the *Sunnah* concerning the Attributes [of Allāh].’”³⁷

³² [Translator’s note]: He is ‘Abdur-Rahmān Ibn ‘Amr al-Awzā‘ī - the Scholar, devout worshipper and *mujābid*. Al-Hākim said, “Al-Awzā‘ī was the *Imām* of the people of his time in general and he was the *Imām* of the people of Shām in particular.” He died in Beirut. Refer to *at-Tadhkirah* (1/178) and *al-Hilyah* (6/135) for his biography.

³³ [Translator’s note]: Related by al-Harawī in *Dham-ul-Kalām* (p.18) and *Sharh Usūl ul-Itiqād* (3/430) with a hasan *isnād*.

³⁴ [Translator’s note]: He is Abū ‘Abdillāh Mālik Ibn Anas, the *Imām* from Madīnah and one of the scholars of *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah*. *Imām* ash-Shāfi‘ī said: “When the scholars are mentioned, then Mālik is a dazzling star.” Refer to *Siyār A‘lam-un-Nubulā* (7/366) by adh-Dhahābī for a complete biography.

³⁵ [Translator’s note]: Related by al-Ājurī (d. 360H) in *ash-Shari‘ah* (p.314), al-Bayhaqī in *al-Asmā` was-Sifāt* (p.453) and also *al-Itiqād* (p.118) and the *isnād* is *hasān*.

³⁶ [Translator’s note]: *Tābi‘ūn* - The successors to the companions of the Messenger of Allāh *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām*.

³⁷ [Translator’s note]: Related by al-Bayhaqī in *al-Asmā` was-Sifāt* (p.408). The *isnād* is *jayyid* as *al-Hāfiẓ* Ibn Hajar said in *Fath-ul-Bārī* (13/406). Ibn Taymiyah said that its *isnād* was *Sabīb* in *al-Hamawīyah*.

The *Shaykh* of *Imām Mālik*, Rabi‘ah Ibn Abī ‘Abdir-Rahmān³⁸ (d. 136H), *rahimahullāh* said, “*Al-Istiwa*³⁹ (Allāh’s ascending) is not unknown, and *how* is incomprehensible. From Allāh is the Message, upon the Messenger is to clearly convey it, and upon us is to affirm it!”⁴⁰

*Imām Mālik*⁴¹ (d. 179H), *rahimahullāh*, was asked about [*how* Allāh made] *al-Istiwa* to which he replied, “*Al-Istiwa* is known and *how* is unknown. To have faith in it is obligatory and to question [*how*] is an innovation.” Then he said to the questioner, “I do not think except that you are an evil man!” So he ordered him to be expelled.⁴²

³⁸ [Translator’s note]: He is Rabi‘ah Ibn Abī ‘Abdir-Rahmān - better known as Rabi‘at-ur-Ra‘ī - one of the *Tābi‘ūn* from Madīnah. Al-Khaṭīb said: “He was a *Faqīh*, a Scholar and a *Hāfiẓ* in *Fiqh* and *Hadīth*.” Refer to *Tārikh Baghdād* (8/420) and *Hilyat-ul-Awliyā`* (3/259) for his biography.

³⁹ [Translator’s note]: Allāh says in numerous places in the *Qur’ān* that He *Istiwa* (Rose over) His Throne [in a way that befits His Majesty], for example: **“Indeed, your Lord is He Who created the Heavens and the Earth in six days, then He *Istiwa* (Rose over) the Throne.”** [*Sūrah al-A’rāf* (7):54].

⁴⁰ [Translator’s note]: *Al-Asmā` was-Sifāt* (pg. 516). Ibn Taymīyah said in *al-Hamawiyah* (pg. 80), “al-Khallāl narrated it with an *isnād* consisting of trustworthy and precise narrators.” Al-Albānī said that the *isnād* was *Ṣabīḥ* in *Mukhtasar al-Uluw* (pg. 132).

⁴¹ See footnote no. 34.

⁴² [Translator’s note]: Related by al-Bayhaqī in *al-Asmā` was-Sifāt* (p. 516) with the wording: “*Al-Istiwa* is not unknown. To have *Īmān* in it is obligatory and to question it is an innovation.” Al-Albānī said that the narration was established in *Mukhtasar al-Uluw* (p. 141). Al-Bayhaqī also relates (p.516), as does ad-Dārimī in *ar-Radd ‘alal-Jahmīyah* (p. 55) - with a *Jayyid isnād*, as Ibn Hajar says in *Fath-ul-Baaree* (13/406) - that *Imām Mālik* said: “*Ar-Rahmān* [Allāh] ascended as He Himself described, and it is not to be asked ‘How?’ as how is unknown.”

This has also been related from *Umm-ul-Mu‘minīn*,⁴³ Umm Salamah, *raḍiyAllāhu ‘anha*.⁴⁴

‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Mubārak⁴⁵ (d. 181H), *rahimahullāh*, said, “We know that our Lord, the Most Perfect, is above the heavens, above His ‘Arsh (Throne), separate from His creation.”⁴⁶

Indeed, there are many statements of the scholars⁴⁷ about this matter and it is not possible to relate them all in such a short space. However, whosoever further desires to be acquainted with these narrations then let him turn to the books of the Scholars of the *Sunnah* concerning this subject, such as: *Kitāb-us-Sunnah* by ‘Abdullāh the son of *Imām* Ahmād (d. 290H), *Kitāb-ut-Tawḥid* by the Great *Imām*, Muḥammad Ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311H), *Kitāb-us-Sunnah* by Abū Qāsim al-Lālikāī (d. 414) and *Kitāb-us-Sunnah* by

⁴³ [Translator’s note]: *Umm-ul-Mu‘minin* - Mother of the Believers. This term was used for the Prophet’s wives.

⁴⁴ [Translator’s note]: The *isnād* is *da‘if*. The *Shaykh* was correct in his using the term ‘*ruwiyā*’ thereby denoting that he considered the narration to be weak. Adh-Dhahabī said in al-‘Uluw (p. 82): ‘This saying has been preserved from a group such as Rabi‘at-ur-Rā‘ī, Mālik and Abū Ja‘far at-Tirmidhī. However, the narration from Umm Salamah is not authentic - since Abū Kinānah is not reliable and Abū ‘Amīr is not known.’

⁴⁵ [Translator’s note]: He is Abū ‘Abdir-Rahmān ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Mubārak al-Marwāzī, the *Imām* from the *Atbā‘-ut-Tābi‘īn*, the *Hāfiẓ*, the *Shaykh* of *Islām*, an example for the people of *Zuhd* and a leader of the *Mujāhidīn*. Refer to *Tarikh Baghdād* (1/152) and *at-Tadhkirah* (1/274) for his biography.

⁴⁶ [Translator’s note]: Reported by *Imām* ‘Abdullāh bin Ahmād in his book *as-Sunnah* (no. 22), ad-Dārimī in *Ar-Radd ‘alal-Jahmīyah* (no. 23), and al-Bukhārī in *Khalq Afāl-ul-Tbād*.

⁴⁷ [Translator’s note]: Please see the Appendix for further statements of the scholars concerning this matter.

Abū Bakr Ibn Abī ‘Āsim (d. 278H).

Refer also to the reply given by *Shaykh-ul-Islām* Ibn Taymīyah (d. 728H) to the people of Ḥamah (entitled *al-‘Aqīdah-ul-Ḥamawiyah*) as it is a great reply, full of benefit. In it he, *rabimabullāh*, has made clear the *‘Aqīdah* of *Ahl-us-Sunnah* quoting much of their words and the textual and intellectual evidences thereby proving the correctness of what *Ahl-us-Sunnah* say and the futility of those who oppose them.

Likewise, refer to his book entitled *al-‘Aqīdah-ut-Tadmuriyah* in which he established and explained the *‘Aqīdah* of *Ahl-us-Sunnah* with both proofs from the texts [i.e. the sources of the Religion] and proofs from sound reasoning. In this treatise he has - for all those who read it with a righteous intention desiring to realise the truth - thoroughly refuted all opposition such that the truth is clarified and falsehood vanquished.

All those who oppose *Ahl-us-Sunnah* in their *‘Aqīdah* concerning Allah’s Names and Attributes will necessarily fall into opposing the textual evidences and sound reasoning and will fall into obvious self-contradiction concerning all that Allāh has affirmed or negated for Himself.

Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah affirm for Allāh the Most Perfect, what He has affirmed for Himself in His Noble Book or what has been affirmed for Him by His Messenger Muhammad *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām* in the authentic *Sunnah*. [They affirm this] without *tamthīl* (resembling), absolving Allāh the Most Perfect from any resemblance to His creation, whilst also rejecting and being free from *ta‘til* (negation). By doing this they have secured themselves against falling into self-contradiction and have enacted all

of the evidences [as opposed to rejecting some and accepting others]. Indeed, this is the way of Allāh concerning the one who holds fast to the truth with which Allāh sent His Messengers and is sincere in his quest for it: He makes him conform to the truth and makes its evidences clear. Allah the Most High says,

بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَطْلِ فَإِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ

Nay! We hurl truth against falsehood so it destroys it; and behold, falsehood is vanquished...⁴⁸

وَلَا يَأْتُونَكُمْ بِمَثَلِ إِلَاحِنَتِكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَهُ أَحْسَنُ تَفْسِيرًا

And no example or similitude do they bring except that We reveal to you the truth and the best explanation thereof...⁴⁹

Al-Hāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr (d. 774H), *rāḥimahullāh*, in his famous explanation [of the Qur’ān] whilst commenting upon the saying of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic,

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سَتَةِ
أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ

Indeed, your Lord is He Who created the Heavens and the Earth in six days, then He *Istiwā* (Rose over) the Throne⁵⁰

explained this issue in a most beautiful manner. I have quoted it here in its entirety due to its great benefit:

⁴⁸ *Sūrah al-Anbiyā`* (21):18

⁴⁹ *Sūrah al-Furqān* (25):33

⁵⁰ *Sūrah al-A‘rāf* (7):54

The stances of the people concerning this issue are many. However, this is not the place to enter into a detailed discussion about it. Indeed, the path we traverse in this issue is to follow the way of the Pious Predecessors such as Mālik, al-Awzā'ī, ath-Thawrī, Layth Ibn Sa'ad, ash-Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad, Is-hāq Ibn Rāhawayah and others from the Scholars of the Muslims, both past and present. Their way is to leave them [the Attributes of Allāh] as they are without *takyīf* (asking how), *tashbīh* (resembling them to the attributes of the creation), or *ta'til* (denying their wording or meaning). Indeed, Allāh does not resemble anything of His creation in any way,

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿١١﴾

There is nothing like Him, He is all-Hearing, all-Seeing.⁵¹

Rather, the matter is as the Scholars such as Nu'aym Ibn Ḥammād al-Khuza'ī (d. 228H), the *Shaykh* of al-Bukhārī said, “Whosoever resembles (makes *tashbīh* of) Allāh to His creation has committed *kufr* (disbelief) and whoever denies what Allāh has described Himself with has also committed *kufr*. Indeed, there is no *tashbīh* at all in that which Allāh has described Himself with, or what His Messenger has described Him with.”⁵² Whoever affirms for Allāh the Most High, what is related in the clear *Āyāt* and the authen-

⁵¹ *Sūrah ash-Shūrah* (42):11

⁵² [Translator's note]: Related by *Imām* al-Dhahabī with his *isnād* in *Mukhtasar al-'Uluw* (pg. 184) and al-Albānī said that its *isnād* was *Sahīb*.

tic narrations in a way that befits Allāh’s Greatness and Majesty, whilst also denying and negating from Allāh the Most High any defects and imperfections; then such a person has truly traversed the path of Guidance.”⁵³

⁵³ [Translator’s note]: *Tafsīr Qur’ān-il-‘Azīm* (2/230) of Ibn Kathīr.

CHAPTER THREE

īmān in the Angels

Belief in the angels is realised in a general and a specific sense.

The general sense of this belief is realised when the Muslim believes that Allāh has angels who He created to obey Him. He describes them as being revered slaves who give His Word sole precedence and do whatever He Commands.

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ
وَلَا يَشْعُرُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَرَضَى وَهُمْ مِنْ حَشِيدَةٍ، مُشَفِّقُونَ

He knows what is before them and what is behind them, they cannot intercede except for him with whom He is pleased. They stand in awe for fear of Him.⁵⁴

The angels are of many different varieties. Some of them are responsible for carrying the Throne, some guard the Paradise and the Hell-Fire and some of them are responsible for writing down people's actions.

As for the specific sense of belief in the angels, then we be-

⁵⁴ *Sūrah al-Anbiyā`* (21): 28

lieve in those angels who have been mentioned by name by Allāh and His Messenger *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām*. These include Jibril, Mīkā‘il, Mālik the guardian of the Hell-Fire, and Isrāfil the one responsible for blowing the trumpet, and he has been mentioned in authentic *ahādīth*.

[We also believe] in that which has been established in the authentic narration of ‘Ā’ishah, *radiy Allāhu ‘anhā*, wherein the Prophet *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām* said, “*The angels were created from light, the jinn were created from a smokeless flame of fire and Ādam was created from that which has been described to you [by Allah in the Qur’ān.]*”⁵⁵ Reported by Muslim in his *Sahīh*.

⁵⁵ [Translator’s note]: For example, the saying of Allāh, “**And He created man from clay like [that of] pottery**” - *Sūrah ar-Rahmān* (55):14

CHAPTER FOUR

Īmān in the Books

It is obligatory to have a general belief that Allāh, the One free from defect, sent down Books to His Prophets and Messengers in order that they may explain and clarify His right and to call to Him. He, the Most High, says,

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا إِلَيْكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ

Indeed, We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs and revealing with them the Book and the Balance (justice) that mankind may stand forth in justice.⁵⁶

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ الْبَيِّنَاتَ مُبَشِّرِينَ
وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحُكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ
فِيمَا أَخْتَلُوا فِيهِ

Mankind were one community and Allāh sent Prophets with glad tidings and warnings, and with them he sent the Book in truth to judge between

⁵⁶ *Sūrah al-Hadid* (57): 25

people in matters wherein they differed.⁵⁷

Specifically, we believe in those Books which Allāh has mentioned by name, including the *Tawrah*, the *Injīl*, the *Zabūr* and the *Qur’ān*.

The Noble *Qur’ān* is the best and last of the Books. It is the *Muhaymin*⁵⁸ of the other books and testifies to the truth that remains within them. It is obligatory upon everyone to follow it and to judge by it along with the authentic *Sunnah* of the Messenger of Allāh, Muḥammad *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām*. This is because Allāh, the One free from all defect, sent Muḥammad *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām* as a messenger to all of mankind and the jinn. He sent this *Qur’ān* so that it may be employed to judge between them. He made it a cure for what is in the hearts, He made it a clarification for everything and He made it guidance and a Mercy for the Believers. Allāh says,

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبَيَّنَاتٍ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى
وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

And We have sent down to you the Book [*Qur’ān*] as an exposition of everything and as guidance and a mercy, and glad tidings are for those who have surrendered [to Allāh, as Muslims].⁵⁹

⁵⁷ *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2):213

⁵⁸ [Translator’s note]: Trustworthy and a witness over the old Books.

⁵⁹ *Sūrah an-Nahl* (16):89

فُلْ

يَكَانُهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي
 لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ
 فَإِنَّمَا نَعْبُدُ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ كِتَابًا مِّنْ بِرِّ اللَّهِ
 وَكَلِمَاتِهِ وَإِنَّمَا عُوْدُ لِعَلَّكُمْ تَهتَدُونَ

Say [O Muḥammad]: O Mankind! Verily I am Allāh's Messenger to you all - to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, there is none Who has the right to be worshipped except He, and it is He that gives life and causes death. So believe in Allāh and His Messenger [Muhammad], the Prophet who can neither read nor write, who believes in Allāh and His Words [this *Qur'ān*]; follow him so that you may be guided.⁶⁰

There are many verses carrying this meaning.

⁶⁰ *Sūrah al-A'rāf* (7):158

CHAPTER FIVE

Īmān in the Messengers

It is obligatory to believe in the Messengers generally, and specifically.

So we believe that Allāh, the One free from defect, sent Messengers to His slaves. They were sent to give glad tidings, to warn and to call to the Truth. Whoever responds to them will achieve happiness and whoever opposes them will remain in failure and regret.

The last and best of the Messengers is our Messenger, Muḥammad the son of ‘Abdullāh *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām*. Allāh says,

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
وَاجْتَنِبُوا الظَّلْمَوْتَ

And verily We have sent amongst every nation a Messenger [saying]: Worship Allāh [Alone] and avoid all false deities.⁶¹

⁶¹ *Sūrah an-Nahl* (16):36

رُسُلًا مُّبَشِّرِينَ
وَمُنذِرِينَ لَنَّا لَيْكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَىٰ أُولَئِكُوْنَ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ

[We sent] Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that mankind should have no plea against Allāh after the Messengers.⁶²

Specifically we believe in those Prophets and Messengers whom Allāh or His Messenger *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām* mentioned by name including Nūh, Hūd, Sālih and Ibrāhīm, may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon all of them.

⁶² *Sūrah an-Nisā`* (4):165

CHAPTER SIX

Īmān in the Last Day

Belief in the Last Day encompasses believing in all that Allāh and His Messenger *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām* have stated concerning it. This includes what will happen after death such as the trial of the grave, its punishment and its blessings; what will happen on the Day of Judgement including the trials, the hardships, the Bridge, the Balance, the Account, the recompense and the distribution of the books⁶³ amongst the people. Some will be receiving their book with their right hands, and others receiving their book in their left hands or behind their backs.

Belief [in the Last Day also] includes: The belief in the fountain (*bawd*) - the drinking place of our Prophet Muhammad *sall Allābu 'alayhi wa sallām*, the belief in the Paradise and the Hell-Fire, the believers seeing their Lord and His Speaking to them and other aspects and events revealed in the Noble *Qur'ān* and the authentic *Sunnah* of the Messenger Muhammad *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām*.

It is obligatory to believe in all of this and to affirm it as being true exactly as has been narrated to us by Allāh and His Messenger *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām*.

⁶³ [Translator's note]: The record of each person's deeds.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Īmān in Predestination

Belief in Predestination consists of four matters:

Firstly, that Allāh knows all that has happened and all that will happen. He knows the conditions of His slaves. He knows their sustenance, their appointed times of death, their [good and bad] deeds and everything else to do with them. Nothing is hidden from Him as He the Most High says,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ
١١٥

Indeed, Allāh has knowledge of all things.⁶⁴

لَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ
اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحْاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلَمًا
١٢٦

That you may know that Allāh has power over all things and that Allāh surrounds [comprehends] all things in [His] knowledge.⁶⁵

Secondly, to believe that Allāh has written everything that He

⁶⁴ Sūrah at-Tawbah (9):115

⁶⁵ Sūrah at-Talāq (65):12

has Predestined or Preordained.⁶⁶ Allāh says,

﴿قَدْ عِلِّمْنَا مَا تَنْقُصُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْهُمْ وَعِنْدَنَا كِتَابٌ حَفِظٌ﴾

We know that which the earth takes of them [their dead bodies], and with Us is a record that contains [everything].⁶⁷

﴿وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ فِي إِيمَانٍ مُّبِينٍ﴾

And all things We have counted up [as a record] in a clear Book.⁶⁸

﴿أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ﴾

Are you not aware that Allāh knows all that is in the heaven and on the earth? Verily, it is [all] in a record. Verily, that is easy for Allāh.⁶⁹

Thirdly, to believe that His Will is continuously being implemented. So whatever He Wills happens and whatever He does not Will does not happen. Allāh, the One free from defect says,

⁶⁶ [Translator’s note]: Arabic - *Qadarabu wa Qadhbahu*. *Qadar* (Preordainment) refers to the Ability of Allāh, His Writing, Knowing, Willing and Creating all things. *Qadhbā* (Predestination) refers to the precise execution and accomplishment of all things predestined. When mentioned alone *Qadar* includes the meaning of *Qadhbā* and vice-versa. ‘Fate in *Islām*’ (pp. 9-10) of Dr. Saleh as-Saleh.

⁶⁷ *Sūrah Qāf* (50):4

⁶⁸ *Sūrah Yā Sīn* (36):12

⁶⁹ *Sūrah al-Hajj* (22):70

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفُهُمْ
وَلَا يَسْعُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَرَضَنِي وَهُمْ مِنْ حَنْسَيْتِهِ مُشْفِقُوْرَ

Verily, Allāh does what He Wills.⁷⁰

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

Verily His command, when He intends a thing,
is only that He says to it, ‘Be’ and it is!⁷¹

وَمَا نَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

And you do not will unless Allāh Wills, the Lord
of the worlds.⁷²

Fourthly, [belief in] His creating everything that exists [including actions]. There is no creator other than Him and no lord apart from Him. Allāh the Most High says,

اللَّهُ خَلِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ

Allāh is the Creator of all things and He is the
Guardian over all things.⁷³

يَأَيُّهَا

النَّاسُ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ هُلْ مِنْ خَلَقٍ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَرْزُقُكُمْ
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَإِنَّ تُؤْفَكُوْرَ

O mankind! Remember the grace of Allāh to you!

⁷⁰ Sūrah al-Hajj (22):18

⁷¹ Sūrah Yā Sīn (36):82

⁷² Sūrah at-Takwīr (81):29

⁷³ Sūrah az-Zumar (39):62

duces for you from the sky and the earth? None has the right to be worshipped but He, how then are you turning away [from Him]?⁷⁴

Thus the belief in Predestination comprises of these four matters according to *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jama‘ah*, as opposed to those from the people of innovation who reject some of these subjects.

⁷⁴ *Sūrah Fātir* (35):3

CHAPTER EIGHT

Other Points Concerning Īmān

Belief in Allāh includes the belief that *Īmān* is comprised of statement and action. It increases with obedience and decreases with disobedience. It is not allowed to declare any Muslim who commits a sin other than *shirk* (associating partners with Allāh) and disbelief, to be a non-believer. [Some examples of sins are] fornication, stealing, dealing with interest, consuming intoxicants, disobeying parents, and other such issues from the major sins. [One cannot call someone a disbeliever if he does any of these sins] provided that he does not consider them to be permissible [in which case he would be a disbeliever]. Allāh the Most High says,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَن يُشْرِكَ بِهِ وَيَعْصِمُ مَوْلَوْنَ ذَلِكَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ

Indeed, Allāh will not forgive *shirk*, but will forgive anything less than this.⁷⁵

It is established from the Messenger of Allāh *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām* from *ahādīth mutawātir*⁷⁶ that, Allāh will take all those who have a mustard seed's weight of *Īmān* out of the Fire.

⁷⁵ *Sūrah an-Nisā`* (4): 48

⁷⁶ [Translator's note]: *Aḥādīth* that have been transmitted by such a large number of people that the narrators cannot be expected to agree upon a lie - *al-Mūqizah* (p. 40) by adh-Dhahabī

Īmān in Allāh also includes loving for the sake of Allāh and hating for the sake of Allāh, having friendship for the sake of Allāh and having enmity for the sake of Allāh. So the believer loves the other believers and has allegiance to them while he hates the non-Muslims and has enmity towards them.

At the head of the believers from this [Muslim] nation (*Ummah*) are the companions (*sabābah*) of the Messenger of Allāh *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām*. *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* love them and have allegiance to them. They believe that they are the best of people after the Prophets, as the Prophet *sall Allābu 'alayhi wa sallām* said, “*The best of generations is my generation, then those who follow them, and then those who follow them.*”⁷⁷

They believe that the best of them is Abū Bakr *as-Siddīq*,⁷⁸ then ‘Umar *al-Fārūq*,⁷⁹ then ‘Uthmān *Dhu-n-Nūrayn*⁸⁰ and then ‘Alī *al-Murtadā*,⁸¹ *radīy Allāhu 'anhum*. After them come the rest of the ten who were promised Paradise and then the rest of the companions of the Messenger of Allāh *sall Allābu 'alayhi wa sallām*. [*Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*] remain silent about the disputes that occurred between the companions and they believe that they each sincerely strove to reach a judgement [concerning the issue]. Whoever was correct will receive two rewards and whoever was incorrect will receive one reward [for his striving].

⁷⁷ Agreed upon as regards its authenticity.

⁷⁸ [Translator's note]: The truthful one.

⁷⁹ [Translator's note]: The one who distinguishes between truth and falsehood.

⁸⁰ [Translator's note]: The possessor of the two lights (named so because he married two of the daughters of the Messenger of Allāh *sall Allābu 'alayhi wa sallām*).

⁸¹ [Translator's note]: The chosen one.

[*Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*] love the believers amongst the family of the Messenger of Allāh. They show allegiance to them as well as the wives of the Messenger of Allāh - the Mothers of the believers - and they are pleased with them all.

[*Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*] are free from the path of the *Rawāfiḍah*⁸² who show enmity towards the companions of the Messenger of Allāh *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām* and revile them, who over extol the *Ahl-ul-Bayt* (the family of the Prophet *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām*) and raise them above the position that Allāh, the Most High, has given them. Likewise [*Ahl-us-Sunnah*] are free from the path of the *Nawāsib*⁸³ who harmed the *Ahl-ul-Bayt* by speech or by action.

All that we have mentioned in this brief discussion concerning the correct *'Aqīdah* which Allāh sent His Messenger, Muḥammad *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām* with, is the *'Aqīdah* of the saved sect, *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*. The Prophet *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām* said about them, “*There will not cease to be a group from my [Muslim] nation being aided upon the Truth, not being harmed by those who oppose them until the command of Allāh, the One far from defect, is established.*”

He *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām* also said, “*The Jews split into seventy-one sects, the Christians split into seventy-two sects and this [Muslim] nation will split into seventy-three sects. All of them are in the Fire except one.*” So his companions asked, “Who are they, oh Messenger of Allāh?” He replied, “*Those who are upon what I and my companions are upon.*”

⁸² [Translator's note]: *Rawāfiḍah* - A group from among the *shi'ah*.

⁸³ [Translator's note]: *Nawāsib* - A sect who hated the family of the Prophet Muḥammad *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām*.

It is compulsory to cling to this *Aqīdah*, to be firm upon it and to warn against that which opposes it.

Those who have deviated from this *Aqīdah* and who remain on that which opposes it are of many types. From them are those who worship idols, angels, saints, the *jinn*, trees, and stones amongst other things. Therefore, such people have not responded to the call of the Messengers. Rather they have opposed them and have gone against them just as the *Quraysh* and the Arab tribes at the time of our Prophet *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām* did. They [the pagan Arabs] would ask their idols to fulfil their needs, to cure their sick and to grant them victory over their enemies. They would go to them sacrificing to them and taking oaths by them. Then, when the Prophet *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām* forbade them from this and commanded them to make their worship sincerely for Allāh alone, they considered this to be strange and rejected it. They said,

أَجْعَلَ اللَّهَ إِلَهًا وَحْدَهُ إِنْ هَذَا الشَّيْءُ بَعْدَابٌ

Has he made all the gods into one god? Indeed,
this is a strange thing!⁸⁴

However, the Prophet *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām* did not cease to call them to Allāh and warn them against associating partners with Allāh (*shirk*). He *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām* explained to them the reality of what he was calling them to, until whomever Allāh Willed to be guided was guided. Then after that, people entered the religion of Allāh in huge numbers. Hence the religion of Allāh was made triumphant over all other religions after

⁸⁴ *Sūrah Sād* (38): 5

the persistent calling and the long and arduous struggle of the Messenger of Allāh *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām* and his companions, *radiy Allāhu 'anhum*, and those who followed them in goodness.

Then [after the passing of time] the situation changed and ignorance prevailed over most of the creation to the point that most returned to the way of ignorance through their over-exalting the prophets and the pious. They would supplicate to them, ask them for aid and relief and commit other types of *shirk*! They did not know the meaning of *Lā ilāha ill Allāh* (nothing has the right to be worshipped except Allāh) while even the non-believing Arabs [at the time of the Prophet *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām*] knew its meaning! Allaah is the source of Help!

This *shirk* continued to spread amongst the people until our time because of the predominance of ignorance and because of the long interval between our time and the time of Prophethood. The doubts of these later people are the same as those of the former peoples [the polytheists of Makkah]. They said, [as Allāh tells us in the *Qur'ān*],

وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شُفَعَّاتُنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

These are our intercessors with Allāh⁸⁵

مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيَقْرِبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَى

We worship them only so that they may bring us closer to Allāh.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ *Sūrah Yūnus* (10): 18

⁸⁶ *Sūrah az-Zumar* (39):3

Allāh has refuted this doubt/error and has explained that whoever worships other than Him, no matter what it may be has indeed associated partners with Him and has disbelieved! Allāh the Most High says,

وَيَعْبُدُونَ كُلُّ مَنْ دُرِّنَ اللَّهُ مَا لَيَصْرُهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ
وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شَفَاعَتُنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

And they worship besides Allāh things that do not hurt them, nor profit them and they say: these are our intercessors with Allāh.⁸⁷

So Allāh the Most High replies to them by saying:

قُلْ أَتُنَبِّئُنَّكُمْ أَنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا
فِي الْأَرْضِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشَرِّكُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

Say: Do you inform Allāh about that which He does not know in the heavens or on earth? Glory be to Him! And He is far above [the partners] they associate [with Him].⁸⁸

In these verses, Allāh is explaining that to worship other than Him, such as the prophets, the pious, or other than them, is major *shirk*, even if the one who does it calls it something else. Allāh the Most High says,

⁸⁷ *Sūrah Yūnus* (10):18

⁸⁸ *Sūrah Yūnus* (10):18

وَالَّذِينَ أَخْذُوا مِنْ
دُونِهِ أَوْ لِكَاءً مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقْرِبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ مُلْفَى

And those who take protecting friends beside Him [say]: We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allāh.⁸⁹

[Again], Allāh the Most High replies to them by saying:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِيمَا هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ كَافِرٌ كَفَّارٌ

Verily! Allāh will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ. Truly Allāh guides not him who is a liar and a disbeliever.⁹⁰

Allāh the Most High explains in these verses, that their worship of other than Him through their supplication [to them], their fear [of them], their hope [in them] and other such things is disbelief in Allāh, the One far from defect. Indeed, He declared them to be liars in their saying that these things they worship bring them closer to Allāh.

From those creeds of unbelief in opposition to the correct *Aqidah* and that which the Messengers came with are:

What is believed by the atheists of this era from amongst the followers of Marx, Lenin and others who call to atheism and disbelief. This is regardless of whether they label it socialism,

⁸⁹ Sūrah az-Zumar (39):3

⁹⁰ Sūrah az-Zumar (39):3

communism, ba‘thism or other such names. For indeed, these foundations are all the same. From their principles are that there is no god and that life is only material. And from their principles: the rejection of the Resurrection, Paradise and Hell-Fire and in fact to disbelief in all the religions. Whosoever looks into their books and studies what they are upon will come to know with certainty that this belief is in opposition to all the revealed religions [in their original form] and leads its adherents to the worst of punishments in this life and the Hereafter.

From the ‘Aqīdah that opposes the true belief is that which some *Bātiniyah* and *Sūfis* believe: they believe that some of those whom they call *Awliyā'* have a share in regulating and controlling the affairs of the world with Allāh. They call them *al-Aqtāb*, *al-Awtād*, and *al-Aghwāt* amongst other names, all of which they have invented for their gods! This is the vilest form of *shirk* in the Lordship of Allāh and it is more evil than the *shirk* of before the advent of Islām! This is because these people [the non-believing Arabs] did not commit *shirk* in Allāh’s Lordship but rather they committed *shirk* in regards to their worship. Furthermore, they committed this type of *shirk* only in times of ease. When they were in times of distress and hardship, they would make their worship sincerely for Allāh alone. Allāh says,

فَإِذَا رَكُوبًا فِي الْأَقْلَاعِ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخَاصِصِينَ لَهُ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا
بَلْ نَحْنُنَا إِلَى الْمُبَرَّأِ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ
١٥

And when they embark on the ships, they invoke Allāh, making their faith pure for Him only. But when He brings them safely to land, behold, they

give a share of their worship to others!⁹¹

As for Lordship, then they used to acknowledge that this is for Allāh Alone, as He, the One free from defect says,

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلُوكُمْ مَمْنَ خَلَقْتُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ^{۲۱}

And when you ask them who created them, they will surely say Allāh.⁹²

قُلْ مَنْ يَرْزُقُكُمْ
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمْ مَنْ يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَمَنْ يُخْرِجُ
الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيْتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيْتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَنْ يَدْرِي الْأَمْرَ
فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّهُ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا تَنْقُونَ^{۲۱}

Say: Who provides for you from the sky and from the earth? Or who owns hearing and sight? And who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living? And who rules and regulates all affairs? They will say Allāh. Say: Will you not then be afraid [about setting up rivals in worship with Allāh]?⁹³

There are many *Āyāt* with this meaning.

As for those who commit *shirk* from amongst the later people, then these have exceeded the earlier ones from two perspectives:

⁹¹ Sūrah al-Ankabūt (29):65

⁹² Sūrah az-Zukhruf (43):87

⁹³ Sūrah Yūnus (10):31

Firstly, some of them have committed *shirk* in Lordship.

Secondly, they commit *shirk* in times of distress as well! One who lives amongst them, examines their affairs, and sees what they do at the graves of Husayn and Badawī and others in Egypt knows this. Of what they do at the graves of Aīdrūs in Eden, of Hādī in Yemen, of Ibn 'Arabī in Syria, of the *Shaykh* 'Abdul-Qādir al-Jilānī in Iraq, and at other famous graves. In all such places the general masses have gone to extremes and have directed many of the rights of Allāh towards them. It is rare to find one who forbids them from what they are doing and explains to them the reality of the *Tawbīd*⁹⁴ that Allāh sent his Prophet *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām* those prophets who came before him with. To Allāh we belong and to Him we return!

We ask Allāh to return them to guidance and to increase the callers to guidance amongst them. [We ask Him also] to grant the ability to the leaders of the Muslims and the scholars to combat this *shirk*. Indeed, He is the One Who Hears and is close.

From those beliefs that oppose the correct creed in the issue pertaining to Allāh's Names and Attributes are the beliefs of the innovators such as the *Jahmiyah*, the *Mu'tazilah* and those who traverse their path in negating the Attributes of Allāh the Mighty and Majestic, divesting Him of the Attributes of perfection, describing Him with attributes of non-existence (*ma'dūm*),⁹⁵ inanimacy (*jamād*) and absurdity (*mustabil*) - Exalted is Allāh, High above what they say about Him!

⁹⁴ [Translator's note]: *Tawbīd* - Singling out Allāh in all that is particular to Him, in our knowledge of Him and in our worship of Him.

Included amongst these people are those who negate some of Allāh's Attributes whilst affirming others, such as the *Ash'arīyah*. Indeed, the same implications hold for those Attributes that they affirm as it does for those that they flee from and negate by figuratively explaining (*ta`wīl*) the evidences for them.

In doing so they oppose [both] the textual and intellectual proofs, as well as fall into clear self-contradiction.⁹⁵

As for *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah*, they affirm for Allāh, the Most Perfect, those Names and Attributes that He affirmed for Himself, or those that His Messenger Muḥammad *sall Allāhu `alayhi wa sallām* affirmed for Him; affirming them in a complete and perfect manner. Likewise they negate for Him any resemblance to His creation, whilst [at the same time] absolving themselves from denying or divesting (*ta'til*) Him of His Attributes. In doing so they act upon all of the proofs, without committing *tahrīf* (distortion) or *ta'til*, as well as remaining free from the contradictions that others have fallen into; as has been previously explained.

This is the path of salvation and [the path of] happiness in this life and the Hereafter. This is the Straight Path that was traversed

⁹⁵ [Translator's note]: Such as their saying that He, the Most High, is neither above nor below the creation.

⁹⁶ [Translator's note]: This is because they give the reason for making *ta`wīl* (figurative explanation) of some of the Attributes of Allāh to be the fear that the general masses might fall into *tashbīh* (likening Allāh to His creation). However, this same reasoning holds true for those Attributes that they do affirm, yet upon which they do not perform *ta`wīl*. Hence, they contradict themselves and the only permissible course is to follow the way of the Pious Predecessors as has preceded in the words of Ibn Kathīr.

by the *Salaf*⁹⁷ of this *Ummah* (nation), as well as their Imāms.

Indeed, the latter part of this nation will not be rectified except by that which rectified the former of them; and that is none other than following the Book and the *Sunnah* and abandoning all that opposes them.

⁹⁷ [Translator’s note]: *Salaf* - The pious predecessors. The first three generations of *Islām* and those who followed them in righteousness. We understand *Islām* as they understood it, due to the saying of the Messenger of Allāh, “*The best of mankind is my generation, then those who follow them, and then those who follow them.*” [Sahīh al-Bukhārī]

APPENDIX

The Position of the *Salaf* Concerning Allāh's Attributes

[i] Al-Awzā'ī (d. 157H) said: I asked az-Zuhrī (d. 124H) and Mak-hūl about the verses pertaining to the Attributes [of Allāh], so they said, “Leave them as they came!”⁹⁸

[ii] Al-Walīd Ibn Muslim said: I asked Mālik (d. 179H), al-Awzā'ī, Layth Ibn Sa'ad (d. 175H) and Sufyān ath-Thawrī (d. 167H) about the reports concerning the Attributes, so they all said, “Leave them as they came, without asking how!”⁹⁹

Imām adh-Dhababī (d. 748H), *rahibahullāh*, said, “I say: Mālik in his time was the *Imām* of the people of al-Madīnah, ath-Thawrī was the *Imām* of Kūfah, al-Awzā'ī was the *Imām* of the people of Damascus, and Layth was the *Imām* of the people of Egypt; and they were from the senior (*kibār*) *Athā'ut-Tābi'ūn*. And this report is a consensus (*ijmā'*) upon this, with the absence of Muḥammad Ibn al-Hasān [Ash-Shaybānī] (d. 189H) the scholar (*faqīh*) of

⁹⁸ Related by al-Lālikā'ī in *Sharh Usūl Abī-lis-Sunnah* (no.735) with a *ḥasān* chain.

⁹⁹ Related by al-Ājurrī in *ash-Shari'ah* (p.314) and al-Bayhaqī in *al-Asmā` was-Sifāt* (p.453) with a *Sahīh* chain, as *Shaykh al-Albānī* stated in *Mukhtasar al-'Uluw* (p.142).

Iraq.”¹⁰⁰

[iii] Rabi‘ah Ibn Abī ‘Abdir-Rahmān (d. 136H), the *Shaykh* of *Imām Mālik*, said, “*Istiwā* is not unknown, how is incomprehensible, from Allāh is the Message, upon the Messenger is to convey it, and upon us is to accept it.”¹⁰¹

[iv] Sufyān Ibn ‘Uyaynah (d. 198H), *rahimahullāh*, said, “Everything that Allāh described Himself with in His Book, then its recitation is its explanation without asking how or resembling.”¹⁰²

[v] *Imām Muhammad Ibn al-Hasān Ash-Shaybānī* (d. 189H), *rahimahullāh*, said, “The Scholars from the east and the west are all united upon having faith in the *Qur’ān* and in the *ahādīth* that are related by the precise, reliable narrators (*thiqāt*) from Allāh’s Messenger *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām*, concerning Allāh’s Attributes, without explanation or resemblance. Whoever explains anything from them this day, has left that which the Prophet *sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallām* was upon and has split from the *Jamā‘ah*. For they neither described nor explained, but rather they gave verdicts with what was in the Book and the *Sunnah*, then remained silent. Whoever speaks with the view of Jahm [Ibn Safwān] has split from the *Jamā‘ah*, because he described Him with attributes

¹⁰⁰ *al-Arba‘in fee Sifātillāh* (180/Q.1-2)

¹⁰¹ Related by al-Lālikā‘ī in *Sharḥ Usūl Abī-is-Sunnah* (no.665) and al-Bayhaqī (p.516). Ibn Taymīyah said in *al-Hamawiyah* (p.45): “Al-Khallāl reported it with a chain of narrators who are all precise and reliable (*thiqāt*) scholars.”

¹⁰² Related by al-Lālikā‘ī in *Sharḥ Usūl Abī-is-Sunnah* (p.736) and ad-Dāraqutnī in *as-Sifāt* (p.61). Its chain is *Sabib* as Ibn Hajar stated in *Fath-ul-Bārī* (13/501).

that are nothing.”¹⁰³

Ibn Taymīyah (d. 728H) said in *Majmū‘ah al-Fatāwā* (5/50), “Muhammad Ibn al-Hasān learnt from Abū Hanīfah (d. 150H), Mālik, and [other] scholars of their level. He related a consensus (*ijmā‘*) and informed that the *Jahmīyah* continuously, or preponderantly describe [Allāh] with matters of negativity. As for his saying: ‘without explanation’, then what is intended by this is the explanation of the *Jahmīyah*; those who innovated an explanation concerning the Attributes, which was in opposition to that which the Companions and their followers were firmly established upon.”

[vi] *Imām* Aḥmad bin Hanbal (d. 214H), *rāḥimahullāh*, said about the *hadīth* of Allāh’s Descending (*Nuzūl*), “We have faith in it and we affirm it, without asking how, without explaining it, nor do we reject anything from it.”¹⁰⁴

Ibn al-‘Uthaymīn said, “The explanation that *Imām* Aḥmad negated in his statement was the explanation that was forwarded by the people of *ta’til* (denial) from the *Jahmīyah* and others. They turned the texts of the Book and the *Sunnah* away from their literal (*dhāhir*) meanings to one that opposes this.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Related by al-Lālikā‘ī in *Sharh Usūl Abī-is-Sunnah* (no.740). Ibn Taymīyah said in *Majmū‘ah al-Fatāwā* (4/4), “It is confirmed from Muhammad Ibn al-Hasān - the companion of Abū Hanīfah - that he said: [as above].”

¹⁰⁴ Related by Ibn al-Jawzī in *Manāqib-ul-Imām Aḥmad* (p.156), Ibn Qudāmah in *Lum’atul-I’tiqād* (no.3) and Ibn al-Qayyim in *as-Sawā‘iqul-Munaẓẓilah* (1/265).

¹⁰⁵ *Fath Rabb-il-Bariyyah* (p.63)

[vii] *Imām* ash-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204H) *rābi‘ahullāh* said, “To Allāh belong Names and Attributes that occur in His Book and that His Prophet related to the nation. It is not possible for anyone to refute (*radd*) them. So the one who contradicts this after the evidence has been established against him then he is a *kāfir* (non-Believer), and as for before the establishment of the proof then he is excused due to ignorance, because the knowledge of that cannot be attained through the intellect. So we affirm these Attributes and we negate *tashbīh* (likening Allāh to creation) as Allāh negated it by saying, ‘there is nothing like Him.’”¹⁰⁶

He also said, “The belief that I am upon, and I saw our Companions, the *As-hāb-ul Hadīth* - like Mālik and Sufyān and others - to be upon is: affirming the testimony that none has the right to be worshipped except Allāh and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh. And that Allāh is Over His Throne, above His Heaven (*‘alā ‘Arshibī fi Samā`ibī*), He comes close to His Creation however He Wills, and He Descends to the lowest heaven however He Wills.”¹⁰⁷

[viii] Nu‘aym Ibn Ḥammād, the *Shaykh* of al-Bukhārī, said, “Whoever resembles Allāh to His creation has committed *kufr* (unbelief). Whoever denies what Allāh has described Himself with has [also] committed unbelief. Whatever He has described

¹⁰⁶ *Siyar A‘lām an-Nubalā* (10/80). Adh-Dhababī says, “Reported by al-Hakkārī and others with a chain of narrators containing trustworthy narrators as in *Mukhtasar al-Uluw* (p. 177). He also said, “I say: the censure of *Kalām* (theological rhetoric) and its people is common from ash-Shāfi‘ī, and he was very stringent in following the narrations in the *usūl* (foundations) and the *furu‘* (branches).”

¹⁰⁷ *Awn al-Ma‘būd* (13/41), and Ibn Abū Ya‘la reports it in *Tabaqāt al-Hanābilā* (1/283) with a chain of narration linked back to ash-Shāfi‘ī.

Himself with, or His Messenger [described Him with], then there is no *tashbih* (resemblance) in it.”¹⁰⁸

[ix] Is-hāq bin Rāḥawayah *rahimahullāh* said, “Indeed Allāh has described Himself in His Book with Attributes from which the creation is left in no need to describe Him with, other than what He described Himself with. From amongst them, ‘Allāh will Come to them in the shade of clouds’ and His saying, ‘And you see the angels around the Throne, hymning the praises of their Lord.’”¹⁰⁹

[x] *Imām at-Tirmidhī* (d. 274H), *rahimahullāh*, said, “It has been stated by more than one person from the people of knowledge regarding this *ḥadīth*, and about the likes of it from the narrations concerning the Attributes, and that Allāh, the Most Blessed, the Most High, Descends to the lowest heaven of this world every night. They said: Affirm the narrations concerning them; have faith (*īmān*) in them; do not imagine them (*lā yatawabbamu*); nor ask how they are (*wa lā yuqālu kayf*). The likes of this has been reported from Mālik Ibn Anas, Sufyān Ibn ‘Uyaynah and ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Mubārak. They said concerning these *ahādīth*, ‘Leave them as they are, without asking how they are (*amirrūbā bilā kayf*).’ This is the saying of the people of knowledge from *Ahl-us-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah*. As for the *Jahmiyah*, then they reject these narrations and say that this is resemblance (*tashbih*). However, Allāh the Most High has mentioned in various places in His Book [His Attribute of] Hand (*Al-Yad*); Hearing (*As-Sam’*) and Seeing (*Al-Basr*), but the *Jahmiyah* give a figurative interpretation (*ta`wīl*) to these verses

¹⁰⁸ Related by al-Lālikā‘ī in *Sharh Usūl Abī-l-Sunnah* (no.936). Its chain of narration is *Sabīh* chain, as *Shaykh al-Albānī* stated in *Mukhtasar al-‘Uluw* (p.184).

¹⁰⁹ *al-Arba‘īn fi Sifatillāh* (no. 144) by adh-Dhahabī.

and explain it in a manner other than how it is explained by the people of knowledge. They say: Indeed, Allāh did not create Aadam with His Hand. They say: Indeed, the Hand [of Allāh] actually means His Power! Is-hāq Ibn Ibrāhīm said: Resemblance (*tashbih*) is when someone says the Hand [of Allāh] is like my hand, or His Hearing is like my hearing. So if someone says this, then this is resemblance. But if someone says what Allāh says, Hand, Hearing, Seeing; and he does not ask how these [Attributes] are, nor does he say that Allāh’s Hearing is like my hearing, then this is not resemblance. Rather, it just like what Allāh the Most Blessed, the Most High, said in His Book,

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَّهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿١١﴾

There is none like Him; He is the All-Hearing,
the All-Seeing. ^{110,111}

[xi] Abū Ja‘far at-Tirmidhī (d. 295H), when asked as to how Allāh keeps His Attribute of being above the creation if He Descends to the Lowest Heaven in the last third of the night, replied, “The *Nuzūl* (Descent of Allāh) is understood, but the how / nature is unknown, and faith in it is obligatory, and to question about [how] it is an innovation (*bid’ah*).” ¹¹²

[xii] Adh-Dhababī says in his *al-Arba‘in fi Sifātillāh*, “It would be beyond ones ability to mention every *Imām* who has words concerning the affirmation of Allāh’s Attributes. If the opponent is not guided by those whom we mentioned saying there is a con-

¹¹⁰ *Sūrah ash-Shūrā* (42):21

¹¹¹ *Sunan at-Tirmidhī* (3/266-268)

¹¹² *Mukhtasar al-Uluw* (p. 231). Al-Albānī declared the chain *Sahīb*. Abū Ja‘far was from the greatest scholars of his day.

sensus upon affirming them without *ta`wil* (figurative interpretation), or he does not believe him in his quote, then Allāh will not guide such a person. By Allāh, there is no good in the one who rejects the likes of az-Zuhrī, Mak-hūl, al-Awzā`ī, ath-Thawrī, Layth bin Sa`ad, Mālik, Ibn ḤUyaynah, Ibn al-Mubārak, Muḥammad bin al-Ḥasan, ash-Shāfi`ī, al-Ḥumaydī, Abū ‘Ubayd, Ahmad bin Hanbal, Abū ‘Isā at-Tirmidhī, Ibn Surayj, Ibn Jarīr at-Tabarī, Ibn Khuzaymah, Zakarīyah as-Sājī, Abūl-Ḥasan al-Ash’arī. Or rejects saying the likes of their saying in acknowledging the consensus on this like al-Khattābī, Abū Bakr al-Ismā`īlī, Abūl-Qāsim at-Tabarānī, Abū Aḥmad al-Āsāl.... and ‘Abdul Qādir al-Jilānī...”

Let us carefully consider the above narrations. Ibn Taymīyah says, “So the saying of Rabi`ah and Mālik ‘*Istiwā* is not unknown, how is incomprehensible, and faith in it is obligatory’ agrees with the saying of the rest, ‘Leave them as they are, without asking how.’ For all they did was to negate knowledge of the *kayfiyah* (how the Divine Attributes are), but did not negate the reality of the Attribute. Therefore, if the people had merely believed in its wording, without understanding its meaning - in a way befitting to Allāh - then why did they say, ‘*Istiwā* is not unknown, and how is incomprehensible.’ And why did they say, ‘Leave them as they came, without asking how.’ Indeed, in this case *Istiwā* would not be known, rather it would be unknown; just like the *Mu`jam* letters [those compound letters that occur at the beginning of certain chapters of the *Qur`ān*; such as: *Alif-Lām-Mim*, etc]. So there would be no need to negate knowledge of the *kayfiyah* (how the Attributes are) if the meaning of the word was not understood. It would only be necessary to negate knowledge of the *kayfiyah* if the [meanings of the] Attribute have been affirmed...”¹¹³

¹¹³ *Majmu`ab al-Fatāwā* (5/41-42)

Also their saying ‘they left them as they are’ necessitates that [what the Attributes] indicated would remain as it were, and they came as words indicating a meaning, so if what they indicated was also to be negated then it would have been necessary to say, ‘they left the words [as they are] with the belief that the meaning was not known’...”¹¹⁴

So upon considering the above it becomes clear that if the *Salaf* had not understood the meaning of the Attributes, rather relegated the meanings to Allāh and just affirmed the wording (*tafwīd* *al-ma’na*) there would have been no conceivable need to negate the *kayfiyah* of the Attributes! Likewise the meaning of ‘reciting them is their explanation’ is that the clear meaning of what we recite is to be taken, and there is no need to delve into figurative explanation (*ta’wil*) or look for hidden and metaphorical meanings etc.

This understanding has also been endorsed by the great Shāfi‘ī *Imām*, al-Khaṭṭābī (d. 388H) when he said, “The *madhab* (way) of the scholars of the *Salaf* and their legal jurists was to leave the likes of these *ahādīth* [concerning the Attributes] upon their literal (*dhāhir*) meanings, not to twist their meanings (*lā yurīghu labā al-Ma’ānī*) and neither to figuratively explain (*ta’wil*) them due to their knowledge that their limited knowledge was incapable of understanding them.

Az-Za‘farānī reported from us from Ibn Abī Khaythama from ‘Abdul-Wahhāb bin Najda al-Hutī from Baqya from al-Awzā‘ī who said, “Mak-hūl and az-Zuhrī used to say: ‘We leave these *ahādīth* as they came.’”

¹¹⁴ *al-Hamawīyah* (p.109)

I say: this is from the knowledge that we have been ordered to believe in literally without attempting to uncover it's hidden meanings, and it belongs to a host of the *mutashābiha* (verses) that Allāh has mentioned in His Book, so He said, 'He is the One Who has sent to you the Book. In it are clear and unequivocal verses, and others are *mutashābihah* (allegorical or open to a number of meanings).'

So from the clear and unequivocal verses arises a true understanding [of their content] and action, and from the *mutashābiha* arises faith and knowledge in their literal meanings, and we leave the knowledge of it's hidden meaning to Allāh, the Most Perfect...' ¹¹⁵

Ibn Taymīyah also says, "...as for the third group, then they are the People of Ignorance and they are many from those who ascribe themselves to the *Sunnah* and following the *Salaf*. They say: The Messenger *sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallām* did not understand the meanings of what Allaah revealed to Him from the verses pertaining to the Attributes [of Allāh], and neither did Jibrīl or the foremost Predecessors understand them. They said the same thing for the *abādīth* concerning the Attributes - that nobody knew their meaning except Allāh.... so these people think that they are following the verse "**and none knows their explanation except Allāh**"but they have not distinguished between the meaning of the words and their explanation and the explanation that Allāh Alone Knows. And they thought that the *ta`wil* (figurative explanation) mentioned in this verse is the *ta`weel* mentioned in the

¹¹⁵ *Mu`ālim as-Sunan* (4/304 - *Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmi*) by al-Khattābī under the chapter, "From the chapter concerning the Seeing (of Allāh in the Hereafter)" when he discusses the *hadīth* of the Descent of Allāh.

words of the later generations and they erred in this... and the explanation of the Attributes whose reality Allāh alone Knows is the knowledge of the *kayfiyah* which is unknown to us. [For example] the *Istiwa* is known, its meaning is understood, and explained and translated in other languages, and this is the explanation that those firmly grounded in knowledge know, but as for the *kayfiyah* (how/nature) of the *Istiwa* then this is the explanation that none but Allāh the Exalted knows.”¹¹⁶

So when we come to realise that the *Salaf* understood the meanings of the Attributes and affirmed them it becomes necessary to also know that they did so while negating four matters:

- [i]. *Tashbih* (likening Allāh to His Creation) and *tajsim* (likening Allāh to a body).
- [ii]. *Takyif* (enquiring into the how or nature of the Attribute).
- [iii]. *Tahrif* (distorting the meaning of the Attribute) and *taghyīr* (changing the meaning of the Attribute) and *ta’wīl* (figuratively interpreting the meaning of the Attribute).
- [iv]. *Ta’til* (denying the Attributes).

¹¹⁶ *al-Hamawiyah* (pp. 24+)